



## Getting a Single Family Building Permit from DCLU

March 2001

This bulletin is designed to help you through the construction permit process when you want to remodel your house, make an addition, convert space to an accessory dwelling unit, or build a completely new house in a Single Family zone in Seattle. It provides general information on how to apply for your building permit, what resources and assistance are available at DCLU, what fees will be charged, how long the process is likely to take, how to track permit status, how the permit is issued, and how and when inspections are initiated.

**NOTE:** Underlined text in this Client Assistance Memo (CAM) indicates the item is available on DCLU's website at [www.cityofseattle.net/dclu](http://www.cityofseattle.net/dclu).

### RESOURCES

The **Public Resource Center** (PRC) is DCLU's general information center, and provides information documents, codes, and access to current Master Use Permit files. The PRC is also the home of the Microfilm Library, where property plan and permit history may be available for your property.

The **Applicant Services Center** (ASC) provides application assistance and intake for all applications to DCLU, including Master Use Permits, Building Permits and associated permits such as electrical, furnace, boiler and sign. The ASC includes the Drainage and Site Development Desks. ASC staff review STFI and 24 hour permits.

The PRC and ASC are located on the 20th floor of Key Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000.

- ASC main phone number: (206) 684-8850
- PRC main phone number: (206) 684-8467
- DCLU Online: [www.cityofseattle.net/dclu](http://www.cityofseattle.net/dclu)

## Client Assistance Memos (CAMs) to Help with Single Family Applications

### Plan standards

- **CAM 103** describes and illustrates the information required on plot plans; sources of further information are also provided. The purpose of a plot plan is to show, to scale, property lines, the location and dimensions of all existing structures, and the location of the proposed work.
- **CAM 103A** provides tips on how to prepare a plot plan.
- **CAM 106** provides drawing standards, including quality, scale and size.
- **CAM 303** explains types of information you may be required to supply, depending on your specific project. Included are sample drawings of a plot plan, elevation, roof and floor framing, and a section.

### Code and General Information

- **CAM 116** and **117** provide information about permits for accessory dwelling units.
- **CAM 220** has information on lot coverage, height limits, and yard requirements.
- **CAM 221** is helpful if you need to create a side yard easement or agreement with your neighbor because of the closeness of your proposed construction to the property line.
- **CAM 303A** outlines a number of typical code items required under the Seattle Building, Energy, and Mechanical Codes.
- **CAM 312** explains the requirements for decks, fences and arbors.
- **CAM 316** describes eligibility and requirements for STFI permits.

The **CAMs** listed above can be obtained in person at the PRC, by mail, or on our website at [www.cityofseattle.net/dclu/publications](http://www.cityofseattle.net/dclu/publications).

## TYPES OF PERMITS FOR SINGLE FAMILY PROJECTS

### Subject to Field Inspection or Plan Review?

Building permits for single family projects can be processed as a “Subject to Field Inspection” (STFI) permit or a Plan Review permit. STFI permits need only limited review, have quick turnaround times, and cost less. Plan Review permits require more in-depth review and may include discretionary elements such as variances, or reviews for shoreline or Environmental Critical Areas.

#### ***Examples of types of projects that typically can be processed as a STFI permit:***

- Roof repair
- Foundation repair if the foundation is not designed as a retaining wall
- Demolition
- Ground-level additions up to 750 square feet, with a limited structural beam span
- Structural alterations to an existing house under certain limits
- Detached structures less than 750 square feet with a limited structural beam span
- Certain dormer additions

#### ***Examples of types of projects that typically cannot be processed as a STFI:***

- Major structural renovation of the house
- Second story addition
- Grading not incidental to construction
- Major ground disturbance in a Critical Area (such as a steep slope)
- Shoreline substantial development
- Variance
- New house

If you think your project might qualify for STFI, be sure to read **CAM 316** for more detailed information.

## SUBJECT TO FIELD INSPECTION (STFI) PERMITS

### Coaching

To help you prepare your application materials, coaching is available at DCLU’s Applicant Service Center (ASC). We want the process to work smoothly for you, and submittal of the correct and full information is vital to a successful process. No appointment is necessary, and there is no charge for coaching. Expect some waiting time as a walk-in customer.

### Forms for STFI projects

Forms can be obtained at the ASC or requested by mail from the ASC staff. Many forms can be accessed online at Publications/Forms.

- The **Subject to Field Inspection Application Form** requests the legal description of the property, Assessor’s Parcel Number, project description, contact person, and other basic information.
- The **Building/Energy Code Checklist for STFIs** serves as a convenient checklist for the various technical requirements (egress, light/ventilation, smoke detector, stair requirements, energy, etc.).
- The **Building or Mechanical Permit Contact Disclosure Form** is required for all construction projects with a value of more than \$5,000, and requires information under Washington State law that must be posted at the job site (e.g., owner, prime contractor, lending institution, etc.).
- The **Glazing Calculation Worksheet for STFI Permits - Energy Code Prescriptive Path** is needed when you are meeting the energy code “prescriptively”, i.e., in accordance with CAM 303A tables.
- The **Equipment Sizing Form**, which deals with Energy Code requirements, is needed if your project contains over 500 square feet of new heated space.
- The **Construction Stormwater Control Checklist** (due online in March 2001) is usually required for projects causing site disturbance of less than 5000 square feet of new or replaced impervious surface. The issues addressed by the checklist include soil stabilization over winter months, sediment retention on-site, prevention of pollution, and construction vehicle access.

- The **Pre-Application Site Visit Request Form** (due online in March 2001) may be required if ground disturbance is proposed. The form notes whether grading, drainage, and/or erosion control review is required and whether the site is in an Environmentally Critical Area (ECA), with the fee dependent upon which of these are applicable. An in-house assessment is made to determine if the form and a site visit are necessary. Often the STFI permit can be issued prior to the actual site visit.

## Types of Plans Required for STFI applications

- **No Plans Required** - usually no plans are required for minor fire damage, roof repair to the original construction, or demolition.
- **Optional Floor Plan** - for minor interior alterations providing one copy of a floor plan is encouraged, but not required. The optional floor plan shows the layout and use of interior space of the building. Include existing structural information, location and size of windows, exits, and ventilation (see **CAM 303** for further details).
- **Plot, Elevation, and Floor Plans Required** - Plot, elevation and floor plans are required for such projects as additions, dormers, enclosing roofed structures and new accessory structures up to 750 square feet (see **CAM 303** for further details). Two copies of your elevation and plot plan are required, one copy of the floor plan.

## Applying for an STFI Permit

- Research the pertinent **CAMs** and other documents, prepare your plans, and fill out the applicable forms.
- Visit the **ASC** for coaching if you feel you need help with the application forms and plans. If your project is determined to be outside the scope of a STFI permit, you will be given detailed information on how to proceed with a Plan Review application with full plans (see **Plan Review Permits** section below).
- Submit your application and payment to the **ASC** in person. No appointment is necessary. You may pay by cash, check or credit card. Once accepted, a Project Number will be assigned to your project. Once the application is issued, a Permit Number will be assigned.
- If minor corrections are required, the **ASC** staff will notify you by phone or in writing. For the fastest

processing, please return corrected plans and documents to the **ASC** as soon as possible. Typical processing time for STFI permits is one working day from the date of filing.

- Once the permit is issued, it will be mailed to you. For particularly simple projects, with fully complete information, the permit may be issued while you wait.
- Additional structural/ordinance corrections that are required during construction are normally handled by the building inspector in the field.

## PLAN REVIEW PERMITS

### CAMs & Codes

Please be sure to consult the pertinent **CAMs** noted above. CAMs offer code information but are not the actual codes. For simple projects, the CAMs may provide most or all the information you need to complete your project. For more complex projects you will need to consult the various **Codes** and **Director's Rules**.

The Codes most often related to a Single Family project are:

- **Seattle Land Use Code** (Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Ch. 23)
- **Seattle Building Code\*** (1997 Uniform Building Code and Seattle amendments)
- **Seattle Energy Code** (Seattle supplement to Washington Administrative Code Ch. 51-11)
- **Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control (SGDC) Ordinance** (SMC Ch. 22.800-22.808)
- **Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) Ordinance** (SMC Ch. 25.09)

\*DCLU's (**PRC**) sells paper copies of all codes administered by DCLU.

## Using Professional Designers and Licensed Builders

As an owner you are welcome to obtain your own permits. If you choose to prepare your own application materials, DCLU staff will assist you as much as is reasonably possible. However, we strongly recommend using a professional designer or licensed builder.

Fully prepared applications are required for all Plan

Review projects, and well-prepared plans have a much higher chance of being expedited (unless your project has unusual structural elements or involves variances, shoreline or ECA). For complex structural projects you may need to have your plans stamped by a licensed architect or engineer.

DCLU staff cannot recommend designers and builders and suggest that for information about their services you consult the Yellow Pages and design and construction associations.

## Application Forms

Forms can be picked up at the **Applicant Services Center (ASC)**, and many are available online. For Plan Review projects your plan sets with supporting documents and the DCLU Coversheets constitute your application. There is no general application form to fill out.

- The “DCLU Single Family Coversheet” is plan size, 24" x 36", and requires owner and project information. Coversheets must be attached to each set of plans.
- The **Address/Records Worksheet** requires property related information, including the legal description, the King County Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) and property dimensions
- The **Building or Mechanical Permit Contact Disclosure Form** is required for all construction projects with a value of more than \$5,000, and requires information under Washington State law that must be posted at the job site (e.g., owner, prime contractor, lending institution, etc.).
- The **Pre-Application Site Visit Request Form** is required for any site disturbance. The owner's signature on this form authorizes a site visit by the inspector. The form also notes whether grading, drainage, and/or erosion control review is required and whether the site is in an Environmentally Critical Area, with the fee dependent upon which of these are applicable.
- The **Construction Stormwater Control Checklist** is usually required for projects causing site disturbance of less than 5000 square feet of new or replaced impervious surface. The issues addressed by the checklist include soil stabilization over winter months, sediment retention on-site, prevention of pollution, and construction vehicle access.
- The **Equipment Sizing Form**, which deals with Energy Code requirements, is needed if your project contains over 500 square feet of new heated

space.

- The **Target UA Calculation Form** is required if you are not using the Prescription Energy Code compliance standards.

## Plan Requirements

- Drawings needed - see **CAMs 103, 103A, 106, and 303**.
- Number of plan sets required - minimum of two full sets. Two additional copies of the plot plan are required. Additional plan sets may be required if your project involves a variance, or shoreline or ECA review. ASC staff will provide that information on a project-specific basis.

## Applying for a Plan Review Permit

Below are five steps for submitting your application. Steps 1 and 2 can be accomplished at the same time. Step 3 is optional but highly recommended. Step 4 is required unless you are on DCLU's Consistently Prepared Applicant list. Step 5 is the application. DCLU's goal is to provide you with as much assistance as possible in advance of your application submittal, so that the application materials are complete and accurate, reducing the need for correction cycles that will delay approval.

### 1. Submit an **Address/Records Worksheet**

This form requests property related information from you, including the legal description and the King County Assessor's Parcel Number (APN). With this information DCLU staff will create a project number for you and establish your legal description and address in our computer tracking system. By project number or address you can track the progress of your application from plan review through construction inspections on **DCLU's Permit Information Online**. You will need to submit a plot plan with the worksheet. The worksheet and plot plan can be faxed to DCLU at (206) 233-7866, dropped off at the ASC counter, mailed to an Address Permit Technician, or processed while you wait if you sign in at the ASC counter before 11:30 am. No appointment is necessary for this step unless your legal description is particularly complex.

Once the completed paperwork has been submitted, a Permit Addressing Technician will do the required property and permit research, and you will be notified by mail of the new address, if required, and the project number. Mailed-in submittals and drop-offs are

normally processed within 48 hours.

## **2. Submit a Pre-Application Site Visit Request Form**

This form is required for projects involving any ground disturbance. The owner's signature on this form authorizes a site visit by the inspector. The form notes whether grading, drainage, and/or erosion control review is required and whether the site is in an Environmentally Critical Area, with the fee dependent upon which of these are applicable (fees range from \$63 to \$500). This form may be submitted at the same time as the application worksheet described in #1 above.

## **3. Coaching - Highly Recommended**

This is not required, but is highly recommended for applicants who are unfamiliar with DCLU's permit process. No appointment or fee is necessary for this session with a Permit Specialist; which is available at any time during the preparation of your application. The purpose is to provide you with specific code and application requirements, including fee estimates.

## **4. Screening**

Screening is required prior to submitting your application, unless you are on the DCLU list of Consistently Prepared Applicants (CPA). No appointment or fee is required for this review with a Permit Leader. This review is to verify the completeness of the plans, forms and other documents prior to submittal. Steps 1 and 2 above must be completed prior to screening. Screening is provided in the **ASC** on a walk-in basis; expect some wait.

## **5. Intake**

Application for Plan Review are made by appointment (or on a walk-in basis following a screening session, but there is no guarantee that intake will occur on a walk-in basis). Approximately 75% of the fee is paid at intake. Intake appointment wait times vary seasonally, from three working days to several weeks. To make an appointment visit the ASC or call them at (206) 684-8850.

## **Fees**

Permits fees are established by the **Seattle Permit Fee Subtitle**.

Examples from the current 2000 fee schedule as of February 2001:

- STFI Permit for a 12'x20' detached garage: \$122.50
- Plan Review Permit for a 25'x30' addition to you house: \$1,118.50
- Plan Review Permit for a 3000 square foot home with 400 square foot garage: \$2,894
- Additional fees are required for such elements as non-incidental grading, variance and shoreline.

## **Required Reviews and Estimated Turnaround Times**

For Single Family Plan Review projects, zoning and building code reviews are always required. Depending on your specific proposal, additional reviews for your project could include ECA, Shoreline, Drainage/Grading.

Turnaround times for initial plan reviews vary throughout the year. The following estimates are useful as general guides only.

- 24-Hour Review: next work day
- Complex Addition/Alteration Review: 4- 5 weeks
- SF Fast Track (straight-forward new home and site): 2 - 3 weeks
- Regular Plan Review (complex new home and/or site): 6 - 7 weeks
- Regular Plan Review with Variance or other discretionary element: 7- 8 weeks

## **Corrections**

It is common for reviewers to require corrections on complex projects. It's important to note that many "corrections" are actually requests for more information, another good reason for taking advantage of the ASC's Coaching services. Corrections are sent by mail, with the reviewer's name and phone number. Contact your reviewer directly if you have questions about the requested corrections. Plans needing correction can be either mailed directly to you or picked up at the **Plan Library**, located on the 21st floor of Key Tower at 700 Fifth Avenue, (206) 684-8169.

## **Tracking Your Permit**

You can get information about your permit as it is being processed by accessing **DCLU's Permit Information Online** or contacting the Plan Library at (206) 684-8169.



## Permit Issuance

Approved plans are issued at the Plans Routing desk in the **ASC**, and can be picked up on a walk-in basis. You will be notified by phone or mail when your plans are ready for issuance, including any remaining fees that must be paid at issuance.

## INSPECTIONS

To request a building inspection for STFI or Plan Review permits, call the 24-hour inspections line at (206) 684-8950. Same day inspections are provided for requests made by 7:00 AM. If you have questions for your inspector, contact them at (206) 684-8950.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *DCLU public information documents should not be used as substitutes for codes and regulations. Details of your project should be reviewed for specific compliance by DCLU staff.*